

Vision improved by cataract surgery and refraction testing in remote areas of 3 districts of Oudomxay Province – Laos, October 2018



Visual disability and blindness are critical public health issues. Blindness creates significant pain and innumerable hardships for the concerned persons, both physically and mentally. It also contributes to the stagnation of economic development and social affairs of the country.

The results of a Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness (RAAB) in Laos (2017) showed a prevalence of blindness in people aged 50+, often caused by cataract. Cataract surgery and eye disease treatment can easily be performed at provincial hospitals, but patients in need of these services are commonly living in remote areas with limited access to medical facilities and at great distances from provincial hospitals.

During the last two weeks of October 2018, Lao Rehabilitation Foundation (LRF) in cooperation with the Eye Unit of Oudomxay Provincial Hospital provided free mobile eye care service in 3 districts (Houn, Beng and Xai) of Oudomxay Province. A total of 595 patients were examined. 89 cataract surgeries and 21 other eye surgeries were performed. Refractive service using LRF's newly imported modern mobile equipment was provided. It resulted in the donation of 154 pairs of glasses that have greatly improved patient's vision and quality of life.

The total cost of 28,930.00 USD for this eye care mission was covered by the Lao Rehabilitation Foundation with additional in-kind support from the Fred Hollows Foundation of Australia, SEE International of California and Cathay Pacific Airways.

Following the eye care mission, LRF's President Dr. Luc Janssens donated new patient monitoring equipment to the intensive care unit (ICU) of the Oudomxay Provincial Hospital.